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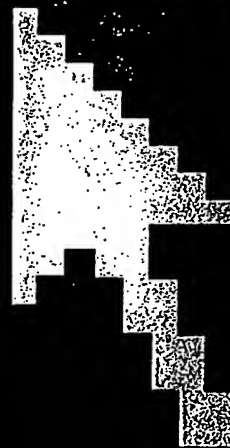3 0402 00166 2677   mputer Reference

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where information is concerned, a changeover that affects form but not substance. Types of conversion include:

■ Data conversion: Changing the way information is represented—for example, changing binary representation to decimal or hexadecimal.

■ File conversion: Changing a file from one format to another. Another, more detailed, type of file conversion involves changing character coding from one standard to another, as in converting EBCDIC characters (which are used primarily with mainframe computers) to ASCII characters. *See also* ASCII, EBCDIC.

■ Hardware conversion: Changing all or part of a computer system to work with new or different devices.

■ Media conversion: Transferring data from one storage medium to another—for example, from disk to tape or from 3.5-inch Apple Macintosh disk to 5.25-inch MS-DOS disk.

■ Software conversion: Changing or moving a program designed to run on one computer to run on another. Usually this involves detailed (professional) work on the program itself.

■ System conversion: Changing from one operating system to another—for example, from MS-DOS to UNIX or OS/2.

conversion table \kan-var'zhan tā'bl\ *n*. A table listing a set of characters or numbers and their equivalents in another coding scheme. Common examples of conversion tables include ASCII tables, which list characters and their ASCII values, and decimal-to-hexadecimal tables. Several conversion tables are in Appendixes A–E.

converter \kan-var'tar\ *n*. Any device that changes electrical signals or computer data from one form to another. For example, an analog-to-digital converter translates analog signals to digital signals.

cookbook[1] \kook'book\ *adj*. Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a book or manual that presents information using a step-by-step approach. For example, a cookbook approach to programming might present a series of sample programs that the reader could analyze and adapt to his or her own needs.

cookbook[2] \kook'book\ *n*. A computer book or manual that presents information using a step-by-step approach. Most often, *cookbook* refers to a programming guide, but it can refer to a book that shows how to accomplish specialized tasks in an application.

cooked mode \kookd' mōd\ *n*. One of two forms (the other being raw mode) in which an operating system such as UNIX or MS-DOS "sees" the handle, or identifier, for a character-based device. If the handle is in cooked mode, the operating system stores each character in a buffer and gives special treatment to carriage returns, end-of-file markers, and linefeed and tab characters, sending a line of data to a device, such as the screen, only after it reads a carriage-return or end-of-file character. In cooked mode, characters read from standard input are often automatically echoed (displayed) on the screen. *Compare* raw mode.

cookie \kook'ē\ *n*. 1. A block of data that a server returns to a client in response to a request from the client. 2. On the World Wide Web, a block of data that a Web server stores on a client system. When a user returns to the same Web site, the browser sends a copy of the cookie back to the server. Cookies are used to identify users, to instruct the server to send a customized version of the requested Web page, to submit account information for the user, and for other administrative purposes. 3. Originally an allusion to "fortune cookie," a UNIX program that outputs a different message, or "fortune," each time it is used. On some systems, the cookie program is run during user logon.

cookie filtering tool \kook'ē fil'tar-ēng tool'\ *n*. A utility that prevents a cookie on a Web browser from relaying information about the user requesting access to a Web site. *See also* cookie (definition 2).

cooperative multitasking \kō-op'ar-a-tiv mul'tē-ta-skēng, mul'tī-ta-skēng\ *n*. A type of multitasking in which one or more background tasks are given processing time during idle times in the foreground task only if the foreground task allows it. This is the primary mode of multitasking in the Macintosh operating system. *See also* background[1], context switching, foreground[1], multitasking, time slice. *Compare* preemptive multitasking.

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ments. such as Microsoft Windows, a unit of infor-
mation passed among running programs. certain
devices in the system, and the operating environ-
ment itself.

message header \mes'əj hed'ər\ *n.* A sequence
of bits or bytes at the beginning of a message that
usually provides a timing sequence and specifies
such aspects of the message structure as its length,
data format, and block identification number. *See
also* header (definition 2).

message of the day \mes'əj əv dhə dā'\ *n.* A
daily bulletin for users of a network. multiuser
computer, or other shared system. In most cases,
users are shown the message of the day when they
log into the system. *Acronym:* MOTD (M'O-T-D').

message queue \mes'əj kyōō'\ *n.* An ordered list
of messages awaiting transmission. from which
they are taken up on a first in, first out (FIFO)
basis.

message reflection \mes'əj rə-flek'shən\ *n.* In
object-oriented programming environments. such
as Visual C++, OLE, and ActiveX. a function that
allows a control to handle its own message. *See
also* ActiveX controls, control (definition 2), OCX,
VBX.

Message Security Protocol \mes'əj se-kyər'i-tē
prō'tə-kol\ *n.* A protocol for Internet messages
that is based on the use of encryption and verifi-
cation to ensure security. It also allows for permis-
sions at the server level for delivery or rejection of
e-mail. *Acronym:* MSP (M'S-P').

message switching \mes'əj swich'ēng\ *n.* A tech-
hique used on some communications networks in
which a message, with appropriate address infor-
mation, is routed through one or more intermedi-
ate switching stations before being sent to its
destination. On a typical message-switching net-
work, a central computer receives messages,
stores them (usually briefly), determines their des-
tination addresses, and then delivers them. Mes-
sage switching enables a network both to regulate
traffic and to use communications lines efficiently.
Compare circuit switching, packet switching.

messaging \mes'ə-jēng\ *n.* The use of comput-
ers and data communication equipment to con-
vey messages from one person to another, as by
e-mail. voice mail, or fax.

messaging application \mes'ə-jēng ə-plə-kā'shən\
n. An application that enables users to send mes-
sages (such as e-mail or fax) to each other.

**Messaging Application Programming Inter-
face** \mes'ə-jēng a-plə-kā-shən prō'gram-ēng
in'tər-fās\ *n. See* MAPI.

messaging client \mes'ə-jēng klī'ənt\ *n.* An
application program that enables its user to send
or receive messages (such as e-mail or fax) to and
from other users with the help of a remote server.

metacharacter \met'ə-kâr'ək-tər\ *n.* A character
embedded in a program source or a data stream
that conveys information about other characters,
rather than itself representing a character. A simple
example is the backslash (\) character. which,
when used in strings in the C programming lan-
guage, indicates that the letter following the back-
slash is part of an escape sequence that enables C
to display a nongraphic character. *See also* escape
character.

metacompiler \met'ə-kəm-pī'lər\ *n.* A compiler
that produces compilers. The UNIX utility *yacc*
(Yet Another Compiler-Compiler) is a metacom-
piler. If it is given a language specification. *yacc*
produces a compiler for that language. *See also*
compiler (definition 2).

Meta-Content Format \met'ə-kon'tent fōr'mat\
n. An open format for describing information
about content of a structured body of data such as
a Web page, a set of files on a Windows desktop,
or a relational database. Meta-Content Format
might be used for indexes. data dictionaries, or
price lists. *Acronym:* MCF (M'C-F').

meta data or **metadata** \met'ə dā'tə, dat'ə\ *n.*
Data about data. For example. the title. subject,
author, and size of a file constitute meta data
about the file. *See also* data dictionary. reposi-
tory.

Metadata Interchange Specification \met'ə-
dā'tə in'tər-chānj spes-ə-fə-kā'shən\ *n.* A set of
specifications dealing with the exchanging. shar-
ing, and managing of meta data. *Acronym:* MDIS
(M'D-I-S'). *See also* meta data.

metafile \met'ə-fīl'\ *n.* A file that contains or
defines other files. Many operating systems use
metafiles to contain directory information about
other files on a given storage device.
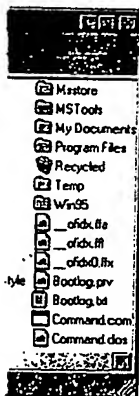
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